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Appln. No. Serial No. 09/876,666

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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Previously Withdrawn) A method for information delivery, comprising the steps of:
 - managing access logs for accesses to information items made by users;
 - receiving a correlation detection condition indicating at least one information item from a client;
 - detecting related users who made accesses to said at least one information item according to the access logs;
 - extracting correlated information items that are accessed by the related users according to the access logs; and
 - delivering the correlated information items to the client.
2. (Previously Withdrawn) The method of claim 1, wherein the extracting step extracts the correlated information items as information items other than the at least one information item indicated by the correlation detection condition that are accessed by the related users.
3. (Previously Withdrawn) The method of claim 1, wherein the extracting step extracts the correlated information items periodically, and the delivering step delivers the correlated information items periodically.
4. (Previously Withdrawn) The method of claim 1, wherein the managing step manages the access logs each of which is recorded when viewing/purchasing of an information item is made by a user.

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5. (Previously Withdrawn) The method of claim 1, wherein the detecting step detects the related users as a prescribed number of users who made relatively greater number of accesses to said at least one information item among those users who made accesses to said at least one information according to the access logs.

6. (Previously Withdrawn) The method of claim 1, wherein the extracting step extracts the correlated information items as a prescribed number of information items that are accessed by the related users for relatively greater number of times among those information items which are accessed by the related users according to the access logs.

7. (Previously Withdrawn) The method of claim 1, wherein the detecting step detects the related users by selecting selected information items in the correlation detection condition for which a total number of accesses is greater than a prescribed threshold, and selecting a prescribed number of users who made accesses to any of the selected information items earlier than other users who made accesses to any of the selected information items according to the access logs, or selecting those users who made accesses to any of the selected information items within a prescribed period of time, and

the extracting step extracts the correlated information items by selecting those information items that are accessed by the related users within a prescribed period of time.

8. (Previously Withdrawn) The method of claim 7, wherein the detecting step selects the selected information items from those information items in the correlation detection condition which have a specific attribute, and detects the related users from those users who have a particular attribute, and

the extracting step extracts the correlated information items from those information items that have the specific attribute.

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9. (Previously Withdrawn) The method of claim 8, wherein the specific attribute indicates a specific information item classification, and the particular attribute indicates a particular user type.

10. (Previously Withdrawn) The method of claim 7, wherein the delivering step delivers the correlated information items in a descending order of a number of times for which each correlated information item is accessed by the related users.

11. (Previously Withdrawn) The method of claim 7, wherein the delivering step delivers the correlated information items in a descending order of a number of users among the related users who accessed each correlated information item.

12. (Previously Withdrawn) The method of claim 7, wherein the delivering step delivers the correlated information items in a descending order of a time at which each correlated information item is accessed by at least one of the related users.

13. (Previously Withdrawn) An information delivery device, comprising:
a unit configured to manage access logs for accesses to information items made by users;

a unit configured to receive a correlation detection condition indicating at least one information item from a client;

a unit configured to detect related users who made accesses to said at least one information item according to the access logs;

a unit configured to extract correlated information items that are accessed by the related users according to the access logs; and

a unit configured to deliver the correlated information items to the client.

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14. (Previously Withdrawn) A computer usable medium having computer readable program codes embodied therein for causing a computer to function as an information delivery server, the computer readable program codes include:

a first computer readable program code for causing said computer to manage access logs for accesses to information items made by users;

a second computer readable program code for causing said computer to receive a correlation detection condition indicating at least one information item from a client;

a third computer readable program code for causing said computer to detect related users who made accesses to said at least one information item according to the access logs;

a fourth computer readable program code for causing said computer to extract correlated information items that are accessed by the related users according to the access logs; and

a fifth computer readable program code for causing said computer to deliver the correlated information items to the client.

15. (Currently Amended) A method for providing an advertisement, comprising the steps of:

managing access logs for accesses made by users with respect to information provided by an information provider, and advertisement information of an advertisement sponsor which is to be provided to a client who is a user accessing target information specified in advance by the advertisement sponsor, the advertisement information being associated with additional information of the advertisement sponsor that can be accessed by the client from the advertisement information;

adding access logs of advertisement agents who are virtual users accessing both the target information and the additional information, to the access logs; and

providing the advertisement in response to a request from the client, by detecting the advertisement agents as related users who made accesses to the target information besides the client according to the access logs, extracting the additional information as correlated information that is accessed by the related users according to the access logs, and delivering

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the advertisement information managed in association with the additional information as extracted, to the client.

16. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 15, further comprising the steps of:
detecting other related users who made accesses to the target information besides the client and the advertisement agents according to the access logs;

extracting potential target information that is accessed by the other related users according to the access logs;

adding access logs of other advertisement agents who are virtual users accessing the additional information and the potential target information, to the access logs managed by the managing step; and

providing a second advertisement to other clients who accessed the potential target information, by detecting the other advertisement agents as other related users who made accesses to the potential target information besides the other clients according to the access logs, extracting the additional information as correlated information that is accessed by the other related users according to the access logs, and delivering second advertisement information managed in association with the additional information as extracted, to the other clients.

17. (Original) The method of claim 15, wherein the providing step delivers the advertisement information in a form of being linked to the additional information.

18. (Cancelled).

19. (Original) The method of claim 15, further comprising the steps of:
counting an advertisement information delivery count and an additional information access count resulting from an actual advertisement providing operation; and

charging an advertisement fee to an advertisement sponsor according to the advertisement information delivery count and/or the additional information access count.

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20. (Original) The method of claim 15, further comprising the steps of:

charging an advertisement fee for a minimum advertisement information delivery count and/or a minimum additional information access count that are guaranteed to an advertisement sponsor such that the advertisement sponsor pays the advertisement fee in advance to an actual advertisement providing operation;

counting an advertisement information delivery count and an additional information access count resulting from the actual advertisement providing operation; and

extending an advertisement posting period for carrying out the actual advertisement providing operation until the advertisement information delivery count and/or the additional information access count reach to the minimum advertisement information delivery count and/or the minimum additional information access count.

21. (Original) The method of claim 15, further comprising the steps of:

charging an advertisement fee for a minimum advertisement information delivery count and/or a minimum additional information access count that are guaranteed to an advertisement sponsor such that the advertisement sponsor pays the advertisement fee in advance to an actual advertisement providing operation;

counting an advertisement information delivery count and an additional information access count resulting from the actual advertisement providing operation for a prescribed advertisement posting period; and

refunding at least a part of the advertisement fee corresponding to a difference of the advertisement information delivery count and/or the additional information access count with respect to the minimum advertisement information delivery count and/or the minimum additional information access count.

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22. (Currently Amended) An advertisement providing device, comprising:

a unit configured to manage access logs for accesses made by users with respect to information provided by an information provider, and advertisement information of an advertisement sponsor which is to be provided to a client who is a user accessing target information specified in advance by the advertisement sponsor, the advertisement information being associated with additional information of the advertisement sponsor that can be accessed by the client from the advertisement information;

a unit configured to add access logs of advertisement agents who are virtual users accessing both the target information and the additional information, to the access logs; and

a unit configured to provide an advertisement in response to a request from the client, by detecting the advertisement agents as related users who made accesses to the target information besides the client according to the access logs, extracting the additional information as correlated information that is accessed by the related users according to the access logs, and delivering the advertisement information managed in association with the additional information as extracted, to the client.

23. (Currently Amended) A computer usable medium having computer readable program codes embodied therein for causing a computer to function as an advertisement providing server, the computer readable program codes include:

a first computer readable program code for causing said computer to manage access logs for accesses made by users with respect to information provided by an information provider, and advertisement information of an advertisement sponsor which is to be provided to a client who is a user accessing target information specified in advance by the advertisement sponsor, the advertisement information being associated with additional information of the advertisement sponsor that can be accessed by the client from the advertisement information;

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a second computer readable program code for causing said computer to add access logs of advertisement agents who are virtual users accessing both the target information and the additional information, to the access logs; and

a third computer readable program code for causing said computer to provide an advertisement in response to a request from the client, by detecting the advertisement agents as related users who made accesses to the target information besides the client according to the access logs, extracting the additional information as correlated information that is accessed by the related users according to the access logs, and delivering the advertisement information managed in association with the additional information as extracted, to the client.

24. (Previously Withdrawn) A method for providing advertisement, comprising the steps of:

managing access logs for accesses to information items made by users;

detecting primary users who made accesses to an advertisement target information item or information items related to the advertisement target information item according to the access logs;

extracting related information items that are accessed by the primary users according to the access logs;

determining potential users who made accesses to the related information items according to the access logs; and

delivering the advertisement target information item to the potential users.

25. (Previously Withdrawn) The method of claim 24, wherein the extracting step extracts the related information items as information items other than the advertisement target information item or information items related to the advertisement target information item, that are accessed by the primary users according to the access logs, and

the determining step determines the potential users as users other than the primary users, who made accesses to the related information items according to the access logs.

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26. (Previously Withdrawn) The method of claim 24, wherein the managing step manages the access logs each of which is recorded when viewing/purchasing of an information item is made by a user.

27. (Previously Withdrawn) The method of claim 24, wherein the managing step manages the access logs each of which indicates at least an accessing user ID and an accessed information item ID.

28. (Previously Withdrawn) The method of claim 24, further comprising the step of:
generating a potential user list in which the potential users are arranged in an order according to the access logs of the potential users,
wherein the delivering step delivers the advertisement target information item to the potential users according to the potential user list.

29. (Previously Withdrawn) The method of claim 28, wherein the delivering step delivers the advertisement target information item only to a prescribed number of the potential users according to the potential user list.

30. (Previously Withdrawn) The method of claim 24, wherein the delivering step delivers the advertisement target information item by sending an advertisement message to the potential users through a network.

31. (Previously Withdrawn) The method of claim 24, wherein the delivering step delivers the advertisement target information item by displaying a banner advertisement for the advertisement target information item in response to an access from any of the potential users.

32. (Previously Withdrawn) The method of claim 24, further comprising the step of:

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charging an advertisement fee to an advertisement sponsor of the advertisement target information item.

33. (Previously Withdrawn) The method of claim 32, wherein the charging step charges the advertisement fee at a meter rate according to an advertisement delivery count.

34. (Previously Withdrawn) The method of claim 32, wherein the charging step charges the advertisement fee at a flat rate guaranteeing a prescribed advertisement delivery count.

35. (Previously Withdrawn) The method of claim 32, wherein the charging step charges the advertisement fee at a meter rate according to an advertisement response count.

36. (Previously Withdrawn) The method of claim 32, wherein the charging step charges the advertisement fee at a flat rate guaranteeing a prescribed advertisement response count.

37. (Previously Withdrawn) An advertisement providing device, comprising:
a unit configured to manage access logs for accesses to information items made by users;

a unit configured to detect primary users who made accesses to an advertisement target information item or information items related to the advertisement target information item according to the access logs;

a unit configured to extract related information items that are accessed by the primary users according to the access logs;

a unit configured to determine potential users who made accesses to the related information items according to the access logs; and

a unit configured to deliver the advertisement target information item to the potential users.

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38. (Previously Withdrawn) A computer usable medium having computer readable program codes embodied therein for causing a computer to function as an advertisement providing server, the computer readable program codes include:

a first computer readable program code for causing said computer to manage access logs for accesses to information items made by users;

a second readable program code for causing said computer to detect primary users who made accesses to an advertisement target information item or information items related to the advertisement target information item according to the access logs;

a third computer readable program code for causing said computer to extract related information items that are accessed by the primary users according to the access logs;

a fourth computer readable program code for causing said computer to determine potential users who made accesses to the related information items according to the access logs; and

a fifth computer readable program code for causing said computer to deliver the advertisement target information item to the potential users.